

Talking Points for the ADDI

29 September 1986

Security Situation in Southern Lebanon*Hizballah attacks*

Southern Lebanon has quieted considerably since the upsurge in Hizballah attacks last week and subsequent concern about a massive Israeli military response.

--[redacted] has temporarily increased its troop strength in southern Lebanon from 750 to over 2000 troops, but has not conducted broad sweep operations like those last February. Instead, the Israelis have sought to demonstrate their continuing strong support for General Lahad's Army of South Lebanon and to warn Hizballah against renewed attacks.

*2000 troops**Gen. Lahad*

Defense Minister Rabin and other Israeli officials have publicly reiterated that Israel does not intend to reintroduce large IDF units into Lebanon, but that the IDF is prepared to use graduated force to buttress Lahad if he comes under Hizballah attack again. Rabin--like Likud leaders--recognizes that the Israeli public has no stomach for major new Lebanon adventures.

Rabin - no

--Israel's muted response so far underscores Tel Aviv's acute awareness that extensive military actions only strengthen Hizballah's ability to recruit fighters from Amal by rallying anti-Israeli sentiment in the south.

The coordinated attacks by Hizballah, however, indicate that the fundamentalist group has already improved its military capabilities and is increasingly focusing on the south--they are likely to resume their attacks on Lahad's forces soon after the Israelis leave.

Hizballah moving in south

--Israel believes--and we agree--that Amal is still somewhat stronger than Hizballah in the south, but that the balance has changed. Should Hizballah eventually gain the upper hand, it is likely to accelerate dramatically the attacks on Lahad's and Israel's forces--which will result in a proportional increase in Israeli reprisals.

US Amal

Defense Minister Rabin recently asked US officials in Tel Aviv if US concern for the safety of the hostages still precluded Israel from striking Hizballah camps in and near Balabakk.

--The Israelis are concerned that their restraint--both in not responding with more massive force to the recent attacks and in avoiding airstrikes on Hizballah's base of operations in Balabakk--may be misinterpreted by the fundamentalists as a sign of weakness.

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UNIF

French *

Fiji

Ghana

Irish

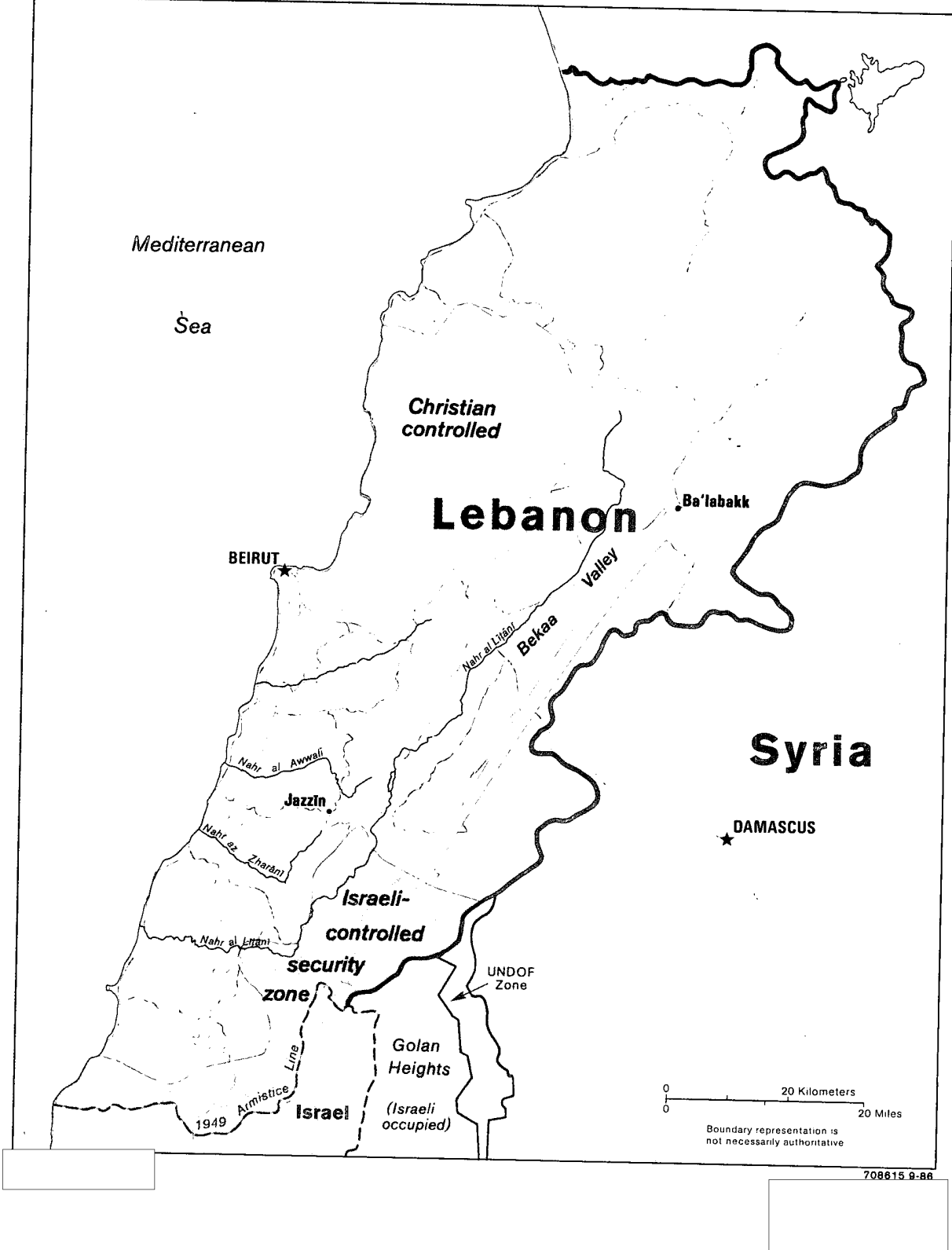
Norway

Nepal

Sweden

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Hizballah Infiltration Routes



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